Method and Practice DEFENDED:

OR, THE LONDON Writing-Master ANSWER'D.

By JOHN MATLOCK.

Praxis sine Methodo nihil valet: Sed Praxis Methodi perfecit Artem.

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DEFENDED.

OF THE

LONDON

Writing-Master

ANSWERED.

TO THE
Most JUDICIOUS
Writing-Masters
OF THIS
KINGDOM.

AS Exactness of Judgment is to be admired; so that which is fallacious, being caused from the Precipitation of the Brain, and for want of due Consideration, ought to be rejected: Therefore, I shall only recommend my self to You, whose Knowledge is acquired by Reason, and whose Reason is perfected by the use of Knowledge; these Acquirements and Practises alone, rendring the Judgment undepraved: And as for the

Censures of those *Demi-Artizans*, I scorn; who make a Profession of Knowledge and Mastership in the Art of *Writing*, and yet are not ashamed freely to confess, that they understand not the Method, (*viz.*) the *Rules*, *Precepts*, and *Principles* thereof. These (to whom *Sense* is a Riddle, and *Reason* a Paradox) being always in Excesses and Extreams, can never make a sound and Judicious Choice; but rashly judge of what they only know confusedly, and obscurely.

The Matter referred to your exactly discerning Judgments, is, That A-la-Mode being grieved at the mentioning in my *Exact Novice*, the Victory obtain'd by the *English Secretary*; he sends his *Polemical* Forces to combat that Method, with which his Judgment before had made an amicable League: But these proving too weak, to abide the Resistance of a sound Method, A-la-Mode makes a dishonourable Retreat, and shelters his batter'd and subdu'd Arguments under the Sanctuary of the Law, threatning the Publication thereof; and that, his Skill failing him, he was resolved to try his Fortune another way; and thereupon he challeng'd me to a Tryal of Mastership, for no less than an Hundred Guinnies. To which I return'd this Answer; Three Things are equally necessary for the compleating of a *Master* in the Art of *Writing*, (*viz.*) a sound *Method*, agreeable *Examples*, and *Ortography*, *& tria sunt omnia*. Now, *Sir*, I will joyn issue with You on these Three undeniable Evidences of *Pen-manship*; and if I prove not my self to excel You in all, or most of these Three before-mentioned, I will not only lose my Wager, but the Lawrel too. I expect, that you shall meet me half way; and then I will submit to the Judgment of any Judicious Person or Persons, that shall be indifferently chosen to judge of our *Method*, *Ortography*, and *Examples*; and no Errors shall be allowed against either, but what

shall

ſhall be proved; and the Sufficiency of the Proof ſhall reſt in the Judgment of them, whom we ſhall agree on for our Judges. This I doubt not, but You, and every unbyaſſed Perſon, will deem ſufficient, and every way pertinent, for the obtaining of a right Judgment in our Skill and Performances. Which my *Antagoniſt* not daring to accept of, he endeavours to avoyd, by averring, That *None are able to give their Opinions either in Method or Orthography, and therefore, he will not be cenſured in either: But if he does not perform by as certain a Method, and undeniable Principles, as my ſelf, he ſays, He will loſe the Wager, and the Laurel too.*

Were theſe the Words of any Other, but the Renowned *A.* the eſteemed *Phœnix* of our Nation, it had been a greater Violence than I could have offer'd to my Reaſon, to have Anſwer'd them, ſince the Contradictions in them deſtroy each other: *If I perform not by as certain a Method*, &c. and, *None can judge of Method*, &c. being as irreconcileable, as *Richard* and *Baxter*.

That which we perform our Work by, being the only Rule and Meaſure of our Performances, makes our Works either good or bad, according to the Exactneſs, or Imperfections of thoſe Rules and Meaſures they accord with: And if ſo, then They can only judge of our Performances, that have a right Knowledge of that Method, by which they ought to be meaſured. And beſides, *Method* being a Part of the Art of *Writing*, none are capable to judge between us, that cannot judge of *Method*; for none can judge of the Whole, that are ignorant of a Part.

As for the other Part of my Anſwer, (*viz.*) *Orthography*, which Mr. *A.* ſays, *None are able to give their Opinions in*, being

being a necessary Part of Method, I need not prove it to be a requisite Knowledge, in order to the pronouncing of a just Sentence, in the Art of *Writing*.

The next Argument offer'd against me, is the form of the Challenge in these Words:

My Challenge was to prove you, in the most Exact, Curious, and Regular Method of Writing, *for an Hundred Guineys.*

My Answer being every way compleat, and pertinent to this Challenge, my Adversary would have done well to have accepted of it. For, is it *Method* that he would prove, or try his Skill with me in? There he has *Method* propos'd to him, as the main Pillar of Art, and in that I am ready to joyn issue with him. Is it *Examples*, or *Practice*, that he would excel me in? There he may find me prepar'd to combat him, according to the best *Method*.

Certainly, a fairer Proposal than This cannot be made, for a Tryal of Mastership in the Art of *Writing*; which he not daring to accept of, I may justly take the Lawrel, which he yields: For he that makes a general Challenge, and afterwards refuseth to engage upon just and equal Terms, is no less conquer'd, than he that contends to the last, and is wounded.

Again, My Adversary objects, That *the best Method cannot but distribute it self so, as to produce the most exquisite and exact Performances: And therefore, if Mr. Mattock can let us see, or would he pretend to, or suffer any to judge of his Method besides himself, he should have worn the Lawrel without any Disturbance from me.*

By

By these Words, *If Mr.* Matlock *can let us see*, &c. it appears on what Conditions he is willing to give me the Victory; and he enforceth the Reasonableness of it in these Words, *The best Method cannot but distribute it self so, as to produce the most exquisite and exact Performances.* To This I plead Conditions perform'd; which being proved, the Verdict, of necessity, must go for me; and then, I hope, I shall wear the Lawrel without disturbance.

That I am the Author of a *Method* both Good, and Rational, which is the Conditions required, I prove by these Words, which I have under my Opposer's own Hand: (Says he,) *I have considered your Contents, with your* Method *of Examination of Hands; and your Conclusions thereon, in point of* Beauty, Firmness, *and* Expedition; *which are Good, and Rational: And withal, I thank you for your Freedom, in proposing to me a* Method, *to answer all those Excellent Qualifications of an Hand.*

Certainly, a more undoubted Proof than This, cannot be made: and were This not sufficient, I might have offer'd in Testimony, my *Pax Nova*, the First Method that's Published of our *English* Hands; and since it's the First, it's the Best; till another, that's Better, appears.

The Objection made against it, (that I know of) is only by my Antagonist, Mr. *R.* who quarrels at the Certainty of Proportion; saying, *How tedious is the use of Scale and Compass?* And indeed, could my Proportions be practised no other way, this had been a good Argument against me; but my Proportions being rightly known, then the Understanding will be the Rule, the Eyes the Compasses, and the Hand will draw the Lines, according as the Understanding directs, and the Eye measures; If the Under-

standing

ſtanding be not inform'd of the Proportions, it cannot guide the Eye; nor can the Eye ſet direct Bounds for the Hand, but the Hand moves at random.

And now I have Finiſhed my *Anſwer* to Mr. *A*'s. Challenge; and therein I appeal to You, who have an entire Knowledge of Your Profeſſion, for Your impartial Judgment: And if You will ſhew me any Error clearly, moderately, and faithfully, that I ſhould not claim this Victory, obtain'd againſt my Challenging *Antagoniſt*; I will not only quit the Lawrel, but I will make a VVork of *Retractions*: But till then not, in the leaſt, think it Arrogancy to aſſume That, to which my *Anagram* does entitle me,

Calamus eſt mihi Honos.

FINIS.